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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 OES-09 CEQ-01 DLOS-09 EB-08
/101 W
----------037269 241529Z /44

P R 241358Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8870
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 QUITO 5095

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ECIN, PBOR, PAOV, SENV, BR, XR, EC
SUBJECT: THE AMAZON PACT
REF: STATE 180478

1. FOR ECUADOR, PARTICIPATION IN THE DELIBERATIONS ON THE AMAZON PACT WEIGHS MUCH MORE HEAVILY THAN THE PROSPECT OF OBTAINING CONCRETE BENEFITS FROM IT. ECUADOR LOST ITS GEOPHYSICAL ACCESS TO THE AMAZON IN THE 1941 WAR WITH PERU, A DEFEAT WHICH STILL RANKLES AND WHICH UNDERLIES THE MOTTO

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THAT IS INSCRIBED ON ALL ECUADOREAN OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE AND IN HUGE LETTERS ON A WALL OF THE LEGISLATIVE PALACE IN QUITO: "ECUADOR WAS, IS AND ALWAYS WILL BE AN AMAZONIIAN COUNTRY". THE ECUADOREAN GOVERNMENT, PRESS AND PUBLIC HAVE TENDED TO LOOK FAVORABLY ON THE AMAZON PACT PRIMARILY BECAUSE ECUADOR'S PARTICIPATION IN IT TENDS TO LEND CREDENCE TO THE MOTTO'S ASSERTION.

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2. ECUADOR'S ONLY POTENTIAL RESERVATION ABOUT THE PACT WAS WHETHER IT WOULD PREJUDICE ITS VARIOUS DISPUTED BOUNDARY CLAIMS IN THE BASIN. SINCE TERRITORIAL DIFFERENCES WERE FINESSED IN THE FINAL DOCUMENT, GOE HAD NO FURTHER OBJECTIONS.

3. THE CONCRETE BENEFIT ECUADOREANS EXPECT FROM THE PACT IS THE EVENTUAL OPENING OF A RIVER ROUTE THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO SHIP CRUDE OIL (AND PERHAPS OTHER PRODUCTS) TO BRAZIL AND PERPHAPS ALSO TO COLOMBIA. THE ECONOMIC ADVISER OF THE ECUADORAN FOREIGN MINISTRY, JULIO CORREA, RECENTLY OPINED TO AN EMBOFF THAT THIS EVENTUALITY WILL PROVIDE A PERMANENT SOLUTION TO ECUADOR'S PROBLEM OF FINDING SIZEABLE MARKETS FOR ITS CRUDE OIL TO REPLACE THE TRADITONAL MARKETS WHICH ALL ARE FADING AWAY (THE U.S. WEST COAST, PERU AND CHILE). BUT VARIOUS OTHER SOURCES, WHO ARE MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE GEOGRAPHIC AND TECHNICAL REALITIES, HAVE TOLD EMBOFFS THEY DOUBT THAT THE RIVER ROUTE COULD EVER BE HARNESSED EFFECTIVELY FOR THAT PURPOSE OR FOR ANY OTHER SIGNIFICANT COMMERCIAL PURPOSE, AND THAT IN ANY CASE THE COST: BENEFIT RATIO FOR THE NECESSARY WORKS WOULD PROBABLY BE VERY HIGH.

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TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 OES-09 DLOS-09 EB-08 CEQ-01
/101 W
----------037374 241530Z /44
P R 241358Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8871
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
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AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
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AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 QUITO 5095

4. THE GOE HAS BEEN DOWNPLAYING THE PROSPECTS FOR SIGNIFICANT SUBSTANTIVE BENEFITS FROM THE PACT. FOREIGN MINISTER AYALA, IN A PRESS CONFERENCE IN BRASILIA, REPORTEDLY STRESSED THAT THE PACT "IS A VISIONARY IDEA THAT WILL NOT BE REALIZED IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE", AND THAT "IT WILL TAKE MANY YEARS" BEFORE THE AMAZON BASIN IS APPRECIABLY DEVELOPED. PRECISELY THESE PARTS OF HIS REMAKRS WERE THE PARTS THAT WERE GIVEN HEADLINE TREAT-MENT IN THE ECUADOREAN PRESS. AN ENSUING EDITORIAL IN QUITO'S LEADING NEWSPAPER, EL COMERCIO, ON JULY 5 DEPICTED THE MAIN VALUE OF THE PACT AS BEING THAT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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FACILITATING COORDINATION BETWEEN THE INTERESTED COUNTRIES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE EFFORTS TO CARRY OUT DEVELOPMENTAL WORKS IN THEIR AMAZONIAN REGIONS. OTHER PRESS COMMENTS HAVE BEEN ALONG THE SAME LINE SINCE THE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT LAST YEAR OF THE WORK ON THE PACT.

5. THE PACT HAS BARELY FIGURED AS A TOPIC OF CONVER-SATION ON THE EMBASSY'S SOCIAL CIRCUIT. ESPECIALLY DURING THESE RECENT MONTHS OF PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNING AND OTHER POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, THE ECUADOREAN PUBLIC SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN LESS THAN FIRED UP OVER THE PACT TOPIC. COMMENTS ON THE PACT BY THE PRESIDENTIAL AND OTHER CONTENDERS, WITH ONE EXCEPTION, HAVE BEEN MINIMAL QUANTITATIVELY AND NON-COMMITAL IN SUBSTANCE. THE SOMMUNIST PARTY CANDIDATE CHARGED THAT THE PACT WAS AN INVITATION TO BRAZIL TO EXERT PERMANENT HEGEMONY OVER THE REGION.

6. THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S COMMENTS TO THE PRESS, AND OTHER MEDIA COMMENTARY, HAVE ALSO STRESSED THAT THE PACT AS EVENTUALLY SIGNED EVIDENTLY COULD NOT SERVE AS A VEHICLE FOR PROPAGATING BRAZILIAN HEGEMONY AMONG THE OTHER PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES. BRAZIL IS GENERALLY GIVEN CREDIT FOR HAVING LAUNCHED THE INITIATIVE AND FOR HAVING BENT OVER BACKWARDS TO HEED THE COMMENTS OF THE OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE SUBSEQUENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INITIATIIVE.

6. RATIFICATION OF THE PACT BY ECUADOR COULD BE DELAYED BY THE UNCERTAINTIES THAT INHERENTLY ARISE AS

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THE JULY 16 ELECTIONS ARE FOLLOWED BY A PRESIDENTIAL
RUN-OFF EXPECTED TO BE HELD IN OCTOBER, AND BY THE PROCESS
THEREAFTER OF TRANSFERRING POWER TO THE NEWLY-ELECTED
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PRESIENT, POSSIBLE IN DECEMBER. BUT IN VIEW OF THE
LACK OF SIGNIFICANT OPPOSITION TO THE PACT BY ANY OF
THE POLITICAL CONTENDERS, AND IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE-
MENTIONED IMPORTANCE OF THE HONOR OF THE THING FOR
ECUADOR'S NATIONAL PSYCHE AND INTERNATIONAL STANDING,
IT IS POSSIBLE TOO THAT THE LAME-DUCK MILITARY REGIME
WILL GIVE SOME PRIORITY TO RATIFICATION OF THE PACT.
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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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Message ID: 302ff96d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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TAGS: ECIN, PBOR, SENV, PA, BR, XR, EC
To: STATE
Type: TE
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